

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) announced that, starting today, those employers who offer health coverage to early retirees can begin applying for help with the costs.

“This could help hundreds of thousands of Americans aged 55 up to when they turn 65,” Wilson said. “Maybe they planned early retirement or were forced to retire earlier than they expected. And employers doing the right thing for their employees deserve financial help so they can stay competitive.”

In recent years, the skyrocketing costs of health care have forced employers to choose between staying competitive and providing their workers and retirees with quality health coverage. In the last two decades alone, the portion of large firms covering retired employees has dropped by more than half, leaving those too young for Medicare without access to the affordable care they need.

The Early Retiree Reinsurance Program will invest \$5 billion in financial assistance for employer health plans offered to early retirees. This initiative will provide premium relief for employers while increasing access to high-quality medical coverage.

The Early Retiree program will provide an important bridge for early retirees and their former employers as we move toward a more competitive, patient-centered health care system in 2014, when the Health Insurance Exchanges begin.

Starting today, employers can go to www.hhs.gov/ociio to fill out the applications for participating in the Early Retiree program. Program participants will be able to submit claims for medical care of their early retirees going back to June 1, 2010.

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